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INCOMING TELEGRAM Department of State

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Info ZNY CCCCC
SS R 290727Z AUG 66
G FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
SP TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC
SAH INFO RUHLHQ/CINCPAC
L ZEN/AMCONSUL DANANG
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P C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 4686
USIA AUGUST 29.
NSC CINCPAC FOR POLAD
INR
CIA SUBJ: ELECTION CAMPAIGN IN KIEN TUONG PROVINCE
NSA
DOD 1. SIX CANDIDATES FOR SINGLE SEAT IN KIEN TUONG INCLUDE
AID THREE MEMBERS PROVINCIAL COUNCIL AND SERVICE CHIEFS FOR HEALTH,
AGRICULTURE AND SOCIAL WELFARE. ONLY PROVINCIAL COUNCIL MEMBER
WITH CHANCE OF WINNING IS CHAIRMAN NGUYEN HUU DUC, AGE 37,
RSR WHO IS GIVEN EVEN CHANCE BY MOST FELLOW CANDIDATES AND BY PRO-
VINCE CHIEF. DUC WAS FORMERLY A LEADER OF THE NATIONAL REVOLU-
TIONARY MOVEMENT IN MOC HOA, AND IS CHAIRMAN OF LOCAL SOUTHERN
BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION. HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE PRESIDENTIAL FORM OF
GOVERNMENT.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Joan Izzo DATE 10/5/81
EO XGDS ☐ or XES ☐ EXT. DATE
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2. ALL THREE SERVICE CHIEFS CONSIDERED TO HAVE SOME CHANCE OF WINNING. LEADING THEM IS AGRICULTURE CHIEF VU HUU DE, AGE 28, SAID TO BE SUPPORTED BY FARMERS AND YOUNGER OFFICIALS AT DISTRICT LEVEL. ALTHOUGH ONLY IN PROVINCE A YEAR, HE HAS TRAVELED TO DISTRICTS FREQUENTLY. HE IS ENGAGED TO YOUNGER SISTER OF PROVINCE CHIEF'S WIFE, BUT HE AND PROVINCE CHIEF DENY THAT THIS IS IMPORTANT FACTOR. HEALTH CHIEF DOCTOR VU NGUYEN BICH, AGE 33, HAS ALSO TRAVELED IN DISTRICTS AND IS SAID TO HAVE INCREASED HIS DISTRIBUTION OF MEDICINE SINCE FILING AS CANDIDATE, BUT HAS DISADVANTAGE THAT HE HAS BEEN IN PORVINCE LESS THAN ONE YEAR. (SINCE HE IS ARVN LIEUTENANT OTHER CANDIDATES SUSPECT THAT HE MAY BE GOVERNMENT CANDIDATE AND HAVE MILITARY SUPPORT.) LOCAL BUDDHIST LEADER THICH MINH DUC BELIEVES THAT SOCIAL WELFARE CHIEF MAI DUC THIEP, AGE 47, HAS BEST CHANCE TO WIN. HE HAS BEEN IN PROVINCE FOUR

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YEARS AND IS OLDER THAN OTHER SERVICE CHIEFS.

3. PROVINCE CHIEF FEELS THAT RELIGION WILL NOT PLAY IMPORTANT ROLE IN ELECTION. CATHOLIC PRIEST IN MOC HOA, FATHER TRI, IS NOT

PAGE 3 RUNJIR 4686 C O N F I D E N T I A L
IMPRESSED WITH ONE CANDIDATE HE RECOGNIZES AS CATHOLIC, PROVINCIAL COUNCILLOR TRAN VAN NGU. NO CAO DAI CANDIDATES, AND LOCAL CAO DIA LEADERS SAID THEY WISHED TO STAY OUT OF POLITICS. PROVINCE CHIEF SAYS THAT VIEN HOA DAO BOYCOTT WILL HAVE NO INFLUENCE IN KIEN TUONG.

4. REMAINING CANDIDATE IS PHAN VAN ANH. LOCAL POLICE OFFICIAL SAYS ANH'S NEPHEW IS VC PLATOON LEADER. ONE OTHER CANDIDATE FILED BUT WITHDREW PRIOR TO SCREENING.

5. PUBLIC OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN BUSY AROUSING POPULAR INTEREST IN ELECTION, BUT IT APPEARS UNLIKELY PEOPLE EXCITED ABOUT VOTING. AGRICULTURE CHIEF ESTIMATED THAT "TREE PERCENT OF POPULATION POLITICALLY AWARE". PROVINCE CHIEF SAYS THAT MAJORITY OF 15,643 REGISTERED VOTERS WILL VOTE, AS IN 1965 ELECTION. VIS CADRE IN VILLAGES WILL OBSERVE ELECTIONS FROM 0700 TO 1100, THEN GO OUT TO REMIND STRAGGLERS THAT POLLS CLOSE AT 1600.

6. THERE IS LITTLE EVIDENCE SO FAR THAT VC HAVE TRIED TO DISRUPT ELECTIONS OTHER THAN BY COUNTER-PROPAGANDA AND CONFISCATION OF ID CARDS. CONSTANT AND APPARENTLY PRO FORMA INSISTENCE BY OFFICIALS AND CANDIDATES IN THIS PROVINCE, AS IN OTHERS, THAT VC WILL DISRUPT ELECTION MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO ASSESS COMPARATIVE EXTENT OF THREAT. LODGE

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